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ABSTRACT

This monograph characterizes the profession of school psychology, describes the roles of school psychologists in the Eugene (Oregon) Public Schools, and profiles Patricia Glassow, recently named School Psychologist of the Year by the Oregon School Psychologists Association. Among those interviewed were the school superintendent, the director of the school psychology program at the University of Oregon, several principals, and a parent. The interviews provided the background for this examination of the profession of school psychologist and the population served in this district. The nine psychologists in this district form an internal support structure in which individual strengths can be shared to meet the demands of sometimes complex cases. Their job descriptions emphasize three major roles: diagnostician, consultant, and case manager. Increasingly, school psychologists see themselves speaking in the interest of students to teachers, administrators, and parents. Names of those interviewed and a nine-item bibliography follow the text. (MLF)

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The School Psychologist: Advocate for Children at Risk

Mary Cihak Jensen

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Preface

Accompanying educators' desire to pursue excellence in schools is their awareness that more rigorous standards create a larger population of students at risk for dropping out of school. These students, as well as those labelled as learning handicapped, challenge districts to balance their efforts towards excellence with interventions for individuals unable to meet new, higher standards of achievement.

Pupil support services staff members--psychologists, counselors, nurses, social workers--direct much of their energy toward diagnosing and assisting these children and their families. This month's Bulletin studies one support service role, that of the school psychologist. In particular, it focuses upon the contributions Patricia Glassow, Oregon School Psychologist Association's "School Psychologist of the Year," makes to her district, the Eugene Public Schools.

As in earlier OSSC profiles of exemplary educators, this Bulletin is a tribute not only to Glassow but to her colleagues throughout Oregon. As individuals and as a profession, they perform a vital service, advocating for the society's children.

This month's Bulletin is written by Mary Cihak Jensen, an OSSC

graduate research assistant. Jensen, having spent ten of her nineteen years of experience in schools as a school psychologist, is currently a doctoral student at the University of Oregon.

Philip K. Piele
Executive Secretary

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Introduction

Each month the Oregon School Study Council investigates exceptional educational practices. Each month that investigation inevitably uncovers outstanding professionals who design, manage, or staff the programs. Although individuals are undoubtedly "what makes schools run," they in turn are supported by systems that recognize and enhance their work.

This month's Bulletin is one of several in the series that have focused on Oregon educators who exemplify the characteristics of their profession. Earlier issues have profiled outstanding teachers and school administrators. This issue focuses upon Eugene Public Schools' Patricia Glassow, recently named "School Psychologist of the Year" by the Oregon School Psychologists Association. In August 1985, her district assigned her to the role of temporary director of Educational Support services. Taking a closer look at Glassow means taking a closer look at her profession, her district, and the population she serves.

A young profession, school psychology seems to have been always at the crossroads of change, altering its job description repeatedly in response to societal and educational needs. Most recently psychologists have been central in helping schools diagnose and meet

the needs of handicapped children. The future of these students and others "at risk" in school systems seems linked with the practice of school psychology. Our Bulletin examines this current function as well as the possible future of school psychologists.

In addition, this study recognizes that while school psychologists make a unique contribution to schools, they do so as part of a pupil support services team that includes counselors, social workers, and nurses. This Bulletin, then, honors Glassow and her colleagues statewide for their contributions to Oregon's children, teachers, and parents.

The Profession of School Psychology

The American Psychological Association describes the school psychologist as a protector and promoter of students' mental health and a facilitator of learning. Such a definition recognizes the inevitable intertwining of children's educational progress and their psychological health. It also recognizes the professional who is skilled in both psychology and education.

History of Its Role Development

Born as a profession just at the turn of the twentieth century, school psychology has since explored a wide range of service models aimed at serving children's emotional and academic needs. Early in its history, school psychology meant primarily the assessment of severely handicapped students experiencing very major difficulties in school.

The profession grew rapidly after 1950 when the school psychologist's job description expanded to serve more children through teacher and parent consultation, therapeutic interventions, and school program evaluation. A second period of dramatic growth occurred in 1975 when Public Law 94-142 mandated attention to all handicapped children, including those with less severe learning disabilities.

For many psychologists, however, Public Law 94-142, with its emphasis upon identifying special education children, demanded a return to a predominantly assessment-based model. For a time it also seemed as if school psychologists should have been trained not only in psychology and education but in law. Gilbert M. Trachtman of New York University wrote in that era:

> Day in and day out the school psychologist is inundated with new rules, new regulations, reports of new legislation or recent rulings that will shortly produce further new rules and regulations.

Now, over ten years later, with special education services and routines well established in most districts, school psychologists' professional associations envision their members again providing an increasingly wide variety of services to children and schools. Their skills are beginning to be used to help school systems meet the needs of a variety of at risk youths. In face, the new job role may be so broad that, after reading some school psychologists' job descriptions, one is tempted to add "and able to leap tall buildings in a single bound" (Trachtman 1981). Indeed, the knowledge base often expected of school psychologists seems endless: tests and measurements, behavior management, counseling, curriculum, special education, child development, family relations, parent education, interpersonal communication, group processes, research and development, program evaluation, personnel training, school law, and ethics.

A Common Thread

There can clearly be no "typical" school psychologist. Job descriptions vary in emphasis according to individual district

priorities as well as the psychologist's own background, training, and personal skills. The fact that school psychologists enter the profession from different backgrounds, some from teaching and others from counseling or clinical psychology, further contributes to their diversity. Training programs understandably vary in their emphases; none claims to provide education in such a wide arena.

Similarly, there can be no "typical day" for a school psychologist. A week's work may include assessing numerous children for special education, determining eligibility for gifted and talented programs, consulting with teachers and parents, managing student crises, counseling, participating in educational planning teams, referring cases to community resources, addressing parent groups, analyzing district test scores, and providing staff inservice. Regardless of how each day is spent, psychologists seem to agree the days are rarely long enough to accommodate the demands on their services. Nationwide school psychological services are frequently staffed at minimal levels.

Rather than one model of school psychology, there are multiple models sharing some common identity. Child advocacy appears to be emerging as that common identity. Psychologists within a school system are in a position to assess as well as to articulate a child's needs. The children for whom they advocate can include the mentally and physically handicapped, learning disabled, drug-involved, abused, and emotionally disturbed. In a broader sense, the school psychologist's advocacy may extend to all children within a school system.

Increasingly, school psychologists see themselves speaking in the

interest of students to teachers, administrators, and parents. One commentator within their profession points out, "Child advocacy has to be a personal commitment above everything else but, on the other hand, true professionalism has little meaning without it" (Mearig 1974).

The Roles of School Psychologists in the Eugene Public Schools

Like their counterparts nationwide, it would be difficult to find a "typical" psychologist in the Eugene Public Schools. One psychologist's interest in clinical psychology makes him especially skillful in assessing emotional disturbance; another has had unique training in classroom assessment; a third specializes in classroom interventions. As a result, the nine psychologists form an internal support structure in which individual strengths can be shared to meet the demands of sometimes complex cases.

Diagnosticians, Case Managers, Consultants

Despite their differences, the Eugene psychologists can be described in some common terms. Their job descriptions emphasize three major roles: diagnostician, consultant, and case manager. Speaking of their role as diagnosticians, Superintendent Margaret Nichols compares the psychologists to cartographers: "They are like mapmakers, studying a child, telling us where the hills and valleys exist in his skills, then studying the learning situation itself, pointing out the cliffs as well as the pot-holes." In Nichols' metaphor, the map-maker/psychologist is also a guide for the child's parents and teachers, showing them what they can do if they wish to help the child reach a better goal or destination.

Arline DeFrank, principal of Willard-Eastside Elementary School, sees the school psychologist as a professional who provides a "fresh, nonbiased, open look" at a situation. "It's sometimes hard for a school staff to be objective about our own students," DeFrank says. As a district-based employee, the psychologist is in a position to offer a more objective opinion about the problems a child faces and what interventions are needed.

DeFrank has seen a steady increase in the amount of consultation district psychologists do in the schools:

> In earlier years a teacher would try a whole series of solutions when children had difficulty. Now, teachers are more likely to seek help as soon as they see that a classroom placement isn't meeting a child's needs. Teachers don't want to keep doing the wrong thing. There's more a sense now that we are all working together to find the best answer for a child. It's not a question of who is to blame for a child's problem, but of what can we do to help.

This change in norms seems related to a trust relationship psychologists are able to establish with teachers as well as to the value teachers place on the psychologists' opinion. DeFrank sees that the district psychologists have the skill to be able to sit down with a diverse group of people--teachers, administrators, counselors, parents--and share information that is perceptive, logical, and practical.

In addition to their roles as diagnosticians and consultants, the Eugene psychologists function as case managers for the district's special education students. This service model is unusual when compared with other delivery models nationwide. David Piercy, administrative assistant to the superintendent, considers the case manager role the most important in the psychologists' job description.

Each identified special education child is assigned to a psychologist whose task it is to observe and advocate for the youngster over time.

The responsibilities of the case manager are wide: conducting annual reviews of the child's placement, conferring regularly with his or her parents, referring to community resources, arranging bus transportation, consulting with school staff over possible academic or behavioral problems, convening a multidisciplinary team for needed decision-making. Where reasonable, case managers follow their children as they change schools, helping to ease transitions to new neighborhoods or between the elementary and middle schools.

In special cases, case managers maintain responsibility for individual children all through their schooling. Such consistent involvement allows the psychologist to become well acquainted with the child's parents and to build sturdy relationships between the family and the school district. "The parents' trust in their case manager is so critical," Piercy says, "that without exception the district honors a parent's request to change managers."

Piercy believes the case manager role includes active advocacy on behalf of the child: "The psychologist's job is to focus on the needs of the youngster and to balance those needs, sometimes against the system." Piercy fully expects psychologists to come to district administrators to argue on behalf of a child: "I expect them to throw tantrums over lack of a needed service." Such service needs can range from a certain teaching method to a particular class or specialized equipment. Superintendent Nichols similarly values the psychologist as one who speaks in the interest of the student: "What is best for the child must be at the very center of their work. The system then

is responsible for accommodating to each child's needs as far as is possible."

Clearly, administrative support enhances the power of the Eugene school psychologists. Marshall Peter, executive director of Lane County Direction Service Inc., is in a good position to evaluate the quality of services offered both by Eugene's psychologists and their administrators. His private nonprofit organization provides information, referrals, and comprehensive case management service to handicapped children, young adults, and their families. As he helps families navigate through school resources, he sees the Eugene school psychologists operating as effective internal advocates. "That role of internal advocate could place a psychologist in a delicate position if a district's administrators were nonsupportive of individual children's needs." In the Eugene Public Schools, he senses that the psychologists get "incredibly strong support for programs for the handicapped from district administrators who deeply understand the mandates of the law." The advocacy function of the Eugene school psychologists is apparently strengthened by their role as part of a district service team.

A Middle School's Support Team

Just as it is hard to separate the effectiveness of a psychologist from that of a district's administration, so it is difficult to separate the psychologist's function from that of a school's support team. Nationwide, school psychologists commonly serve as members of school-based, multidisciplinary "Child Study" teams that address individual students' needs. Eugene's Roosevelt

Middle School provides a model of such a team designed to meet the needs of the school's handicapped and other at risk students.

The concern of the Roosevelt Middle School staff for students at risk echoes that of the Eugene school district itself. Headed by David Piercy, a group of district educators has begun a study of children at risk of becoming school dropouts. Piercy's "Thought Paper on the At Risk Student," presented to the Eugene School Board in April 1985, described students at risk:

> Many at risk students have academic and social skill problems. Academically some students are creative thinkers, have excellent skills and are bored with school. Many at risk students come from troubled families where there are financial problems, child abuse, or single parents. Some families are extremely mobile, moving three or four times a year. The very nature of the American family is changing. More students than ever are using and abusing drugs and alcohol. Many students are involved with the law.

At a subsequent board meeting, the committee called for an analysis of instructional strategies, early identification of at risk students, attention to difficult transition periods, increased involvement with families, consistent behavior policies, and supportive school climates.

Roosevelt Middle School serves seven hundred students of widely differing socioeconomic backgrounds and current achievement levels. Even though the school attains consistently high test scores, its staff worries about the adolescents who "fall through the cracks," becoming lost in a large school. "There are just lots of ways for a student to get lost academically or emotionally in a school this large," Principal Jerry Henderson says. Noting that public education receives considerable and sometimes unwarranted criticism, he says, "Criticism stings educators the most, hurts us the most, when we know

it is at least partially true." He observes that traditionally critics of schools have pointed to the numbers of young people who fail within or drop out of the educational system. "For whatever reason a student is in trouble in our school," Henderson says, "we must discover how to help him before it is too late."

Roosevelt utilizes a support services team to address the problems within its student body. This multidisciplinary team includes the school's administrators, counselor, nurse, and special education teacher, as well as a social worker and psychologist from the district. In addition to the specific training inherent in their individual professions, the Roosevelt team members seek continued updating of their mutual skills: most recently they participated in Impact, a drug and alcohol prevention training offered by the parent organization CompCare at Sacred Heart Hospital's Adolescent Care Unit, Eugene.

The team meets weekly to consider individual students who may be considered at risk within the school, whether because of academic difficulties or behavioral or social-emotional problems. Team members combine their observations first to search for patterns that illuminate the cause of the student's difficulty and second to seek options for assisting him or her. Piecing together significant information is much like piecing together any complex puzzle. The school counselor may share reports of a student's failure in two classes; the nurse may note that he or she visits the health office frequently with physical complaints; the social worker may describe his parents' concern. "No one person has all the information we need to meet a child's needs," Henderson explains, "but when we meet, the

picture comes together and we begin to see what might be done to help." The weekly problem-solving meetings are a necessity, according to Henderson: "We simply can't wait for a student to reach a crisis state before we focus on his case. A crisis is just too late."

Henderson considers the school psychologist a critical member of the school's support team. The psychologist brings specialized technical skills to the weekly sessions, in particular knowledge of human development and of assessment procedures, and familiarity with district and community resources. Frequently the psychologist functions as the team's link to available special education services, assisting team members as they determine how appropriate the at risk student's current classes are and whether or not a referral for special education assessment is needed. If it is, the psychologist represents the team's opinion to the student's parents. As Henderson points out:

> It takes a special kind of skill to talk with a parent whose youngster is not succeeding in school and to turn the situation to a positive direction, showing the parent that there is hope. Parents whose child is failing know he's unsuccessful; they just may not know what needs to happen next. The psychologist fills in the gaps in information and encourages them that special programs may help.

Such communications, he contends, take a blend of straightforwardness, credibility, and sensitivity. While a psychologist's technical skills are important to Roosevelt's support team, the psychologist's "people skills" are equally critical.

Profile of Patricia Glassow

Asked to describe Eugene School Psychologist Patricia Glassow, her colleagues invariably characterize her in the same way: She is, they say, an exceptionally competent professional, direct and straight-forward, wise and compassionate.

One must also add "unassuming" and "modest" to the list of descriptors. In naming her the year's "Outstanding School Psychologist," the Oregon School Psychologists Association honored Glassow's commitment to students, her promotion of the expanded role of the school psychologist, service to the association, and guidance to school psychology interns. In naming her for this honor, the association of her peers also caused her considerable uncomfortableness. "There are just so many fine professionals," she insists.

Glassow was hesitant to submit to our interviews, anxious that the spotlight we proposed be widened to include her colleagues. Her final consent, we believed, had more to do with her desire to serve her profession than with any wish to bring attention to her own accomplishments.

Professional and Personal Skills

Glassow brings a broad background to her role of school psychologist. After completing her bachelor's degree in education at the University of Oregon in 1963, she taught for one year until the oldest of her two daughters was born. "I tried very hard to be a housewife while the girls were young and that worked for awhile." But, as Marshall Peter says, Glassow "is a person who doesn't sit around a lot." Soon she offered volunteer services in an elementary school remedial reading program. Before long she was running the program five mornings a week and hiring a babysitter. She easily agreed with her husband's opinion that she might as well return to work full time, but she found her interests had now moved from the regular classroom to remedial and special education.

A Master's degree in special education and years of teaching experience in that area opened yet another career door for Glassow. As a resource room teacher, she worked with a school psychologist in a team approach to diagnose and address the needs of the ten to twenty most at risk children in the district. Participating in the process of team diagnosis and service intrigued Glassow: "I was captivated by the excitement I felt when we found some answers and could watch a child grow." That excitement provided the energy for her to return to the University, this time seeking certification as a school psychologist.

Demands of the Job

Seven years later, the profession continues to capture Glassow's imagination. There are, she says, no two days alike. Certainly there

are no restful days; there is always more that can be done for children in need. Glassow confesses that she is a "list-maker" who enjoys crossing tasks off the list as they are completed. That part of her personality, however, has had to adjust to the demands of the school psychology position. How does one "complete" service to an exceptionally needy child, or to teachers and parents requesting help?

> In this job you are never caught up. I've never really quite adjusted to that fact. I can always think of a hundred more things it would be good to be able to do. There tends to be about a week in January when I feel caught up. But I can't make long-range commitments even then, because if I do, the next day there will be ten referrals in my mailbox.

Glassow is assigned routinely to four Eugene schools and is one of two psychologists who also assess severely handicapped students throughout the district. Like most of her counterparts nationwide, she spends the majority of her day assessing children for special education and meeting with the children's parents and teachers to plan individual educational programs. In these planning sessions, the test score itself is viewed as only part of the information about the child. A youngster's history, social skills, health, and family support factors are all weighed against the test results before a decision is made regarding the child's most appropriate class placement. Such thorough evaluation take hours, even days.

During the last school year Glassow tested two hundred and twenty children. Being a highly organized "list-maker" doesn't solve the time management problem such a caseload presents. Glassow frequently writes test reports and makes followup phone calls at home. Weighing professional and personal responsibilities is difficult: "I'm just not able to do the entire job in the eight-hour day, but I battle a

personal conflict when I know I'm taking time away from my family." The circle is vicious: Glassow counts time with her husband and two girls as her greatest stress management technique.

The Child's Advocate

In each of her cases, Glassow views the child as her client. This position as child advocate sometimes places her in the middle of parents and school staffs who may see the situation differently and have differing interests in its solution. Alice Miles Erickson, now a school psychologist and educational consultant in Portland, worked with Glassow for nearly three years in internships through the University of Oregon. In those years, Erickson saw the duality of a psychologist's role. "It is rather an enigma," she says, "to represent the child and the parent as well as the school district. A psychologist like Pat can compensate for that dual role by balancing out the needs of each party. Pat is a skilled mediator and facilitator in those meetings."

How does Glassow deal with the demands of the advocacy position?

> Eugene is an exceptionally good system and we usually come up with creative solutions for kids. There's always a good degree of accommodation. It's rare that I feel discouraged.
>
> One thing that helps me is that I don't look upon situations as if they need to be fully solved today. We need to make a good first step. If I walk away feeling less than satisfied about that first step, I know that step two is coming and step three after that. Mine can be a long-term involvement if it needs to be.

Eugene's case manager structure fits well with Glassow's philosophy of long-term involvement with families: "I truly appreciate getting to know the children and their families. Often I

am on a first-name basis with them." Last year she was case manager for approximately ninety identified special education students, where possible following them as they changed programs and schools. For parents, the psychologist/case manager becomes the constant, the person they can consult with over time. For the district the case manager is a point of contact between the school and the family. If there is tension or frustration between the two parties, it is the case manager who brings parents and school personnel together to negotiate decisions for the child.

A caseload typically includes seriously handicapped children whose problems will never be totally solved regardless of the amount of energy the psychologist expends. In addition, many of the children come from families that are not involved in their child's education, families that may never be receptive to any of the school's recommendations. How does the school psychologist cope with this reality? Glassow says, "As a human being one does the best you possibly can. At the same time you encourage everybody else in the system to do the best they possibly can."

Working with Parents of Handicapped Children

The presence of a disabled child may alter nearly every aspect of a family's life. For the child's parents, facing the youngster's current needs and an uncertain future can be emotionally exhausting. Frequently it is the school psychologist who must confirm what parents suspect, that their child has serious learning or developmental problems. Glassow finds this aspect of her job the most difficult:

The area I'm most concerned about is presenting test

> information to parents. My evaluation has to be more than just test scores. Special education has been marvelous for a lot of kids, but it is not a remedial program. Children are labelled and those labels can be destructive. Labelling a child as handicapped is a scary power, almost god-like, one I take very seriously. I'll never be wholly comfortable with walking into a meeting and telling a parent there is something distinctly wrong with their child. Yet it's probably the most crucial part of my job.

Glassow struggles to word her evaluation so that parents have realistic expectations of their child and yet still see many positive things about the youngster. In working with parents of the more seriously afflicted children, she sees them suffering a loss of expectations and ego. She believes that many parents of the handicapped go through emotional stages similar to those Elizabeth Kubler-Ross says the terminally ill experience. First attempting to deny the real nature of the child's handicap, these parents may then become angry at the schools or at other forces they believe could be responsible for the problem. The "bargaining" phase is next: A parent may ask, "If we read every night, can we fix this in six months?" Depression and grieving precedes the final stage of acceptance. Glassow believes that constructive acceptance of a child's handicap may take years and that the case manager structure is well suited to such circumstances.

Evaluation of the child is not, however, just one-sided. Hildegard Krusenstjerna, parent of a special education student, finds Glassow sensitive to parents' feelings: "She thinks you know your child best and makes you comfortable about giving your opinion." When Krusenstjerna believed her child could function well in a regular class room, Glassow volunteered to retest the child even though he wasn't currently on her caseload. "She wanted to give him the benefit

of working with someone he'd known before. She makes such an effort to get the best from a child. She called the evening before the testing to see how he had been feeling."

At meetings of parents, Krusenstjerna says, Glassow listens first: "She then makes good recommendations, but she never pushes her opinion. She wants all of us to come together to decide." Krusenstjerna recalled a particularly difficult meeting at which she had expressed her concerns about her child's placement: "Pat called me that night and asked how I was feeling."

A Support Team Member

Just as in her meetings with parents, Glassow's consultations with school staff members begin with listening. When she talks with teachers about children, she presents herself "not as 'an expert with all the answers' but as a resource for recommendations." She finds the multi-disciplinary support teams such as the one at Roosevelt Middle School a particularly exciting concept: "Together we're much more effective than we are individually. I try in all my schools to develop a good team, to include as many key staff members as I can in decision-making about children." She finds there is a broader effect on the entire school when good pupil services teams are functioning. For example, if an administrator on the team sees that part of the system is not meeting the needs of children, he or she may have the power to make needed changes.

Glassow is seeking answers, as is her district, for at risk students not served by special education programs:

The support teams work well in brainstorming ideas for

students who are at risk and yet not eligible for any special-education programs. We look at auxiliary services like Chapter 1, at peer tutoring, peer counseling, at matching them up with an advisor, who tries to "hook them into" the school system.

For example, when one child needed work-completion structure, a teacher agreed to offer a study period at the end of the day. If his work was done, he got a free period instead. It was powerful for him. Other times we may suggest that the at risk child tutor a younger child--it's a way to practice skills that's easy on the ego.

She expresses deep concern for drug-dependent youth. "The part that is frightening for me is that I'm convinced that somehow a youngster heavily using drugs may not go through the typical stages of adolescence. Adolescents need to learn mature social skills, yet if they are always using a crutch, a chemical, they may not learn those skills. I sense a great danger when adolescents inhibit their social, emotional, and intellectual growth through the use of drugs."

The popularity of drugs among adolescents is frustrating for Glassow and other members of the support teams: "Frankly drugs seem to be a good match for kids. When they go through adolescence, they have such serious questions about who they are and what they should be doing. There are tremendous stresses involved in growing up. Drugs and alcohol become tantalizing but destructive ways to alleviate the tension." She finds some hope in programs like Impact that train school staff to spot chemically dependent youth and intervene in a nonthreatening manner.

What can parents and school personnel watch for as symptoms of an at risk child? Glassow advises that they investigate children whose school attendance has dropped, whose academic scores are falling, or who withdraw from their usual peer group. Her district's documents on

the at risk population identify the transitions between schools as difficult times. Glassow agrees: "Those moves can trigger a downwards spiral. I tell parents that they are in the best position at those times to note what may appear to be insignificant changes in the child and to seek help." The ideal situation, she reminds parents and teachers, is education and prevention. If that isn't successful, early identification and involvement when you first suspect a problem--long before a situation becomes a crisis--is the next best goal.

Service to Her Profession

The Oregon School Psychologists Association, in honoring Glassow, recognized her commitment to the training and supervision of school psychology interns. As a visiting professor at the University of Oregon, Glassow supervises interns in and out of her district. Erickson spoke for many University of Oregon graduates who had learned from Glassow: "There is probably no other single individual in Oregon who has directly served as role model, trainer, teacher, friend, and ongoing support and consultant to so many of us who are now practicing school psychologists." Although Glassow insists she learns as much from the interns she supervises as they learn from her, Erickson says, "She's touched our lives as a primary role-model. She's given us all the support we needed and then known when to let go."

In addition, Glassow served last year as an officer is OSPA. How did she find time? "How could I not find time? I believe professionals simply owe their associations a period of service." She is proud of OSPA's effect on school psychology statewide. Currently

the association is setting high expectations for its members' continuing education, a move Glassow strongly supports.

Glassow also volunteers her services to the district as a member of an internal cadre of organization development specialists. With other cadre members, she assists district staff in organizational problem-solving, for example, helping individual schools develop needs assessments or formulate teaching teams.

The Year Ahead

Not surprisingly, Glassow has been named her district's temporary director of Educational Support Services. As such, she heads the school psychology department and directs special education, health, and other auxiliary services. Such a promotion is not unusual for school psychologists, and Glassow agrees that there may not be any other job that better prepares one for an administrative role.

Typical of Glassow, she describes her new position in terms of service: "I'll be wrestling with the budget, providing the resources for my people, supporting them as they help provide the best education for kids." Also typical of Glassow, she looks forward to getting involved personally in the more complicated cases: "I'll be pulling together community resources and expertise to meet those children's needs."

Her enthusiasm for her new position is not without nostalgia for the old job. "I've always found working with children the most reinforcing part of my day. I'll tell you what is rewarding for me: a few days after what I thought had been a long, hard testing session, a little second grader walked up to me in the school hall and asked,

'When are you going to test me again?' It's the children who often say thank you with their smiles or by telling me 'school is better now'."

The Future of School Psychology

Within the profession itself, there is growing consensus that the school psychologist of the future will spend less time assessing problems and more time attempting to solve or prevent them. The ideal service model appears to be changing to one in which the psychologist will function primarily as a consultant in instructional design, a leader in social and effective education, and a specialist in parent training.

Broader Role Descriptions?

Mark Shinn, assistant professor of educational psychology and director of the school psychology program at the University of Oregon, believes psychologists in the schools will be increasingly involved in program development and evaluation, and in instructional and behavioral consultation. "Their attention will move from measuring individual students to evaluating the quality of the educational programs themselves," he predicts. He agrees with a recent statement published by the National Association of School Psychologists and the National Coalition of Advocates for Students:

> Issues of excellence will not be solved by merely raising academic standards or increasing exposure to "the basics." These "solutions," if implemented in the absence of

> carefully designed support services, will only increase the number of children who experience failure in our schools. Thus, our greatest challenge is to fashion a comprehensive educational service delivery system to effectively serve all of our children.

Ensuring effective educational services for all children should be the school psychologists' focus, he says. Such a model does not diminish service to handicapped children, he explains. Improvement of the regular classroom programs only makes specialized placements less necessary; improvement of special education allows handicapped children to develop more fully their potential.

Eugene Public Schools' Piercy also believes it's time to use the psychologist's skills in a broader way. He anticipates that school psychologists will be increasingly involved with at risk students who are not eligible for special education programs. He finds that psychologists have skills the school system needs in order to deal with this part of its population. "They have an understanding of tests and measurements that can help schools understand who is having problems. Some have exceptional skills in counseling and behavioral interventions. Others are able to lead a group of adults in problem-identification and solution."

Although observers might say that Pat Glassow already fulfills a broad job description, she would like to see her profession achieve some of the objectives promoted by its national association:

- to improve instruction in all classes so we no longer need "specialists" to teach basic academic skills
- to design social skills and effective education for all students
- to develop a system which serves children without labelling them

- to see problems of discipline as a challenge to provide better management techniques for all children
- to train parents and to train our students to be better parents (Ysseldyke and others 1984)

But she adds, smiling, "If we really did all that, we'd work ourselves out of a job." She believes that realistically, along with a wider job function, school psychologists will continue to be "gatekeepers" for special education, determiners of eligibility for the funded programs.

Where will tomorrow's psychologist find time to deal with a still broader role? First, Shinn foresees that the assessment process for special education eligibility will become more time and cost-efficient. He questions the utility of some tests currently in use, contending that tests should be given to help instructional planning, not to place a misleading label on a child. In addition, he predicts that, given multiple roles open to them, school psychologists will forge job descriptions based on their district's needs and their own individual specializations.

In larger districts, psychologists may function much like a college faculty in terms of specialization, some becoming particularly skilled in instructional practices, others in family counseling, others in staff and parent training. Only so much can be asked of an individual, he says. "In our training programs maybe we need to teach people to sometimes simply say, 'I don't know about that.' Every profession has to know its limits."

The Ever-Present Issue of Finances

The future of school psychology is limited not just by the

psychologist's imagination and the district's needs. Shinn is well aware that when a district seeks budget cuts, it may diminish pupil support services including school psychology. "I would argue, though, that a well-trained psychologist can save a district money. It costs a lot to send a child to a special setting. If you can facilitate changes in the regular and special education settings, you save more money."

Yet, a district faced with financial pressures may favor reductions in the number of school psychologists, counselors, nurses, and social workers, believing that these cutbacks will have little immediate effect on the operations of the district. Over time, however, serious long-range consequences tend to follow such decisions. Superintendent Nichols reflects on the Eugene Schools' recent history:

> In the past few years, there has been a real enthusiasm for cutting budgets. These cuts have been necessitated in many cases, but perhaps we've neglected to teach people the consequences of those cuts.
>
> In Eugene 4J, over the last few years we've made decisions to reduce and not expand our support services. We've also increased our pupil-staffing ratios. These decisions have resulted in problems we should have anticipated: an increase in the number of youngsters we now identify as at risk, and requests for more help than we can provide.

Noting ruefully the value of hindsight, Nichols accepts responsibility for participating in decisions that diminished support services, but she insists:

> I'll never forget the lessons I learned here. Indeed I might be forced to do the same thing again someday, but next time I'll be able to tell you what impact such cuts will have--there will be more children needing help than we can care for, more students dropping out of school, more health problems than we can face.

Expressing pride in the quality of support personnel in her district, Nichols voices her commitment to continue services: "We're more convinced now that this is a utility, not a luxury."

It is easy to cite humanitarian reasons for maintaining well-staffed pupil services departments. Often more difficult is the task of appealing to a society's more pragmatic motivations. Nichols is equally prepared to address the practical issues of funding:

> Every school dropout costs society thousands of dollars. People who do not graduate from high school make far less money over a lifetime and thus offer their government far less support. It is to society's benefit to have more people capable of making a good livelihood.
>
> Poor children, particularly poor minority children, are in a chronic downwards spiral....We can't afford not to pay attention to their needs. Our lives in this society are all incredibly intertwined--what affects one of us affects all of us. These children are our investment in a secure future. When I'm 83 years old and on social security I'll be depending on the ability of today's children to earn a living and help support me. Failure to educate our nation's poorest children will cause major problems in society for everyone.

Compounding the problems a district faces when it trims mental and physical health services are the frequently simultaneous cutbacks in federal and state budgets. Reducing community-based children's services in turn increases the responsibility of a school district's support services personnel. Diminishing children's services, whether at the federal, state, or district level, is, in Nichols' view, "false economy. Kids pay the price when these services are reduced--there's no doubt about it--but, then, so do all of us."

Conclusion

Societal trends and needs have historically influenced the job description of the school psychologist. Most recently, psychologists in the schools have worked to provide equal educational opportunity for physically, developmentally, or learning handicapped children. Currently, an emphasis upon rigorous standards in schools has caused districts like Eugene 4J to be increasingly concerned about other children at risk for becoming school dropouts. Some see the school psychologist, along with counselors, nurses, and social workers, prepared to address the requirements of such a population.

Other observers predict the psychologist of the future will spend more time facilitating solutions for the school systems' overall problems than assessing and counseling individual students. The school psychologist's training in both education and psychology, they say, makes them likely consultants, program evaluators, staff and parent trainers. Regardless of the prediction they favor, commentators agree that school districts must be mindful that if they hire school psychologists for the wide services they offer, they must also allow them time to function effectively in those roles.

Indeed, school psychologists are already performing many if not all of the broader role functions. Frequently they do so against the

odds of minimal staffing and tenuous financing. When Patricia Glassow and her colleagues advocate for children, they share expertise and energy with school administrators, teachers, and parents. As Margaret Nichols reminds us, they serve us all in this interdependent society.

Interviews

Arline DeFrank, principal, Willard-Eastside Elementary School, Eugene, Oregon. Telephone interview June 28, 1985.

Alice Miles Erickson, school psychologist and educational consultant, Portland, Oregon. Interview July 31, 1985.

Patricia Glassow, temporary director of educational support services, Eugene Public Schools, Eugene, Oregon. Interviews June 27, July 5, July 24, 1985.

Jerry Henderson, principal, Roosevelt Middle School, Eugene, Oregon. Telephone interview July 1, 1985.

Hildegard Krusenstjerna, parent, Eugene, Oregon. Telephone interview August 2, 1985.

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Marshall Peter, executive director, Lane County Direction Service Inc., Eugene, Oregon. Telephone interview August 2, 1985.

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